

Message Text

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46

ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO CINCUSNAVEUR PRIORITY

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USS GILMORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 10264

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, IT

SUBJECT: LA MADDALENA PX AND COMMISSARY

REF: ROME 9691; ROME 9811

1. SUMMARY. EMBASSY SENT FOREIGN OFFICE AIDE MEMOIRE SPELLING OUT NEED TO PUT DEPENDENT SUPPORT FACILITIES UNDER BIA ASAP, AND ENCLOSING DRAFT LANGUAGE FOR USE IN AMENDING PROTOCOL. CONTINGENCY CIRCULAR 175 AUTHORITY REQUESTED. WE CAN GIVE NO FIRM ESTIMATE WHEN PROCESS WOULD BE COMPLETED. THEREFORE NAVY MUST MAKE DECISION RE MOVE TO SANTO STEFANO. END SUMMARY.

2. DESPITE EMBASSY'S DAILY ATTEMPTS TO PRY PX-COMMISSARY DECISION OUT OF MORO PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR MOSCOW ON JULY 24, HE HAS NOT ACTED ON THE MATTER. FOREIGN OFFICE NATO CHIEF DA RIN AND EMBOFF REVIEWED MATTER ON JULY 24 AND AGREED THAT ONE WAY TO ELICIT RESPONSE FROM MORO WOULD BE FOR U.S. TO TRANSMIT AN AIDE MEMOIRE WHICH WOULD ENCLOSE A DRAFT
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PROTOCOL PUTTING SHORE BASED DEPENDENT SUPPORT FACILITIES UNDER

THE BIA. EMBASSY FORWARDED FOLLOWING AIDE MEMOIRE TO FONMIN
ON JULY 25.

3. BEGIN AIDE MEMOIRE. PURSUANT TO AMBASSADOR VOLPE'S CONVERSATION
WITH FOREIGN MINISTER MORO ON JULY 16 REGARDING THE LA MADDALENA
PX AND COMMISSARY PROBLEM, DURING WHICH THE FOREIGN MINISTER
EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE NEED TO ARRIVE AT A MUTUALLY
SATISFACTORY SOLUTION, THE EMBASSY WISHES TO PROPOSE THAT THE
1954 BILATERAL INFRASTRUCTURE AGREEMENT BE AMENDED TO INCLUDE
THESE DEPENDENT SUPPORT FACILITIES, THEREBY PROVIDING A SOUND
LEGAL BASIS FOR THEIR OPERATION ON THE ISLAND. SUCH AN AMEND-
MENT WOULD COVER THE FACILITIES BOTH IN THE NEAR TERM (WHEN THE
PX AND COMMISSARY WOULD OPERATE OUT OF THE NON-COMMISSIONED
OFFICERS CLUB BEING CONSTRUCTED ON ITALIAN NAVY PROPERTY) AND
LATER WHEN THE FACILITIES WOULD BE MOVED TO THE AREA WHERE THE
FAMILY HOUSING IS BEING CONSTRUCTED.

ATTACHED IS AN ILLUSTRATIVE DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE 1954
INFRASTRUCTURE AGREEMENT WHICH MIGHT BE USED FOR THIS PURPOSE.
IF AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE IS REACHED ON THE TEXT, THE EMBASSY
WOULD SUBMIT IT TO WASHINGTON FOR FINAL APPROVAL.

AS THE MINISTRY IS AWARE, THE PX AND COMMISSARY AT LA
MADDALENA HAVE BEEN CLOSED SINCE THE END OF MAY. THIS HAS
RESULTED IN SIGNIFICANT HARDSHIP FOR THE 459 DEPENDENTS OF THE
CREW OF THE SUBMARINE TENDER. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE
FACILITIES BE REOPENED ON THE NATO FACILITY ON THE ISLAND OF
SAN STEFANO. THE EMBASSY IS INFORMED BY THE U.S. NAVY
THAT THIS WOULD BE A WORKABLE SOLUTION FOR THE SUMMER MONTHS,
BUT WOULD BE UNSATISFACTORY DURING THE WINTER BECAUSE OF
WEATHER CONDITIONS. OUR PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A PX AND
COMMISSARY AS AN ADJUNCT TO THE NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER
CLUB BEING CONSTRUCTED ON ITALIAN NAVY PROPERTY WOULD ACHIEVE
THE IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE OF LOCATING THE FACILITIES AWAY FROM
DOWNTOWN LA MADDALENA, ON PROPERTY NOT ACCESSIBLE TO THE
CITIZENRY OF THE TOWN. WHEN THE MAJOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT,
WHICH WOULD INCLUDE A PERMANENT PX AND COMMISSARY, IS
COMPLETED 18 TO 24 MONTHS FROM NOW, THE SAME SITUATION
WOULD PREVAIL, AS THIS CONSTRUCTION PROJECT IS LOCATED WELL
OUT FROM THE TOWN IN AN AREA OF VERY LOW VISIBILITY.
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THE EMBASSY APPRECIATES THAT LOCAL MERCHANTS IN LA
MADDALENA SHOULD NOT SUFFER AS A RESULT OF THE EXISTENCE OF
THE PX AND COMMISSARY. THEREFORE, THE EMBASSY WILL DO ITS
UTMOST TO ENSURE THAT THE MERCHANDISE BEING SOLD IS NOT IN
DIRECT COMPETITION WITH THAT AVAILABLE LOCALLY. FACTORS THAT
WOULD BEAR ON THIS POINT WOULD BE PECULIARITIES OF THE AMERICAN
DIET AND THE QUALITY AND PRICE OF AVAILABLE MERCHANDISE.

RECALLING THAT FOREIGN MINISTER MORO INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE WOULD BE DISCUSSING THIS MATTER WITH DEFENSE MINISTER ANDREOTTI, THE EMBASSY HOPES THAT THIS MEMORANDUM AND ITS ATTACHMENTS WILL BE USEFUL DURING THESE DISCUSSIONS AND THAT, SUBJECT TO THE MINISTERS APPROVAL, AN AMENDMENT TO THE 1954 BILATERAL INFRASTRUCTURE AGREEMENT, ALONG THE LINES OF THE ATTACHE, WILL PROVIDE A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION. END AIDE MEMOIRE.

4. THE PERTINENT SECTION OF THE DRAFT PROTOCOL READS:
GENERAL AREA: LA MADDALENA, SARDINIA.
APPROXIMATE NUMBER U.S. PERSONNEL (NOT INCLUDING FAMILIES) 75
GENERAL DESCRIPTION: DEPENDENT SUPPORT FACILITIES.

5. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS NON-SPECIFIC LANGUAGE GUARANTEES THAT PX/COMMISSARY WOULD BE UNDER LEGAL UMBRELLA OF BIA WHETHER IT WAS SITUATED AT NCO CLUB OR LATER AT THE HOUSING SITE.

6. FOR DEPARTMENT: PLEASE REVIEW DRAFT PROTOCOL LANGUAGE AND PROVIDE US CIRCULAR 175 AUTHORITY TO NEGOTIATE ON URGENT BASIS.

7. FOR CINCUSNAVEUR: UNFORTUNATELY WE ARE UNABLE GIVE ESTIMATE HOW LONG THIS BIA PROCESS MIGHT TAKE SHOULD WE GET POSITIVE GOI RESPONSE. AT THIS JUNCTURE WE HAVE NO IRON-CLAD GUARANTEES RE TEMPORARY NATURE OF ANY MOVE TO SANTO STEFANO; BUT, ITALIANS HAVE ALWAYS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT OUR INTENT IS THAT ANY SUCH MOVE WOULD ONLY BE TEMPORARY.

8. THEREFORE, HE NAVY MUST JUDGE THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF CURRENT HARDHIPS AT LA MADDALENA VERSUS COST OF MOVING TO SANTO STEFANO AND RISK THAT SUCH MOVE MIGHT TURN OUT TO CONFIDENTIAL

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NOT BE TEMPORARY IN ADDRESSING QUESTION OF WHETHER TO OPEN STORES AT SANTO STEFANO OR RIDE WITH THE STATUS QUO UNTIL FINAL DECISION IS MADE BY GOI ON BIA AMENDMENT. VOLPE

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